

From: Tom Cooper
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/8/02 1:59pm
Subject: Microsoft settlement - a thoughtful, non-profane comment

Sirs,

I have been a customer and user of Microsoft's products for more than 16 years. During that time, I have observed them on many occasions do those things for which they have been found guilty. I am thrilled that the court has recognized the Microsoft abuses.

I voted for president Bush and have the highest respect for Attorney General Ashcroft and his integrity, but since the Bush administration entered the picture it appears that the government has backed down on punishing Microsoft for its abuses.

Evidence that Microsoft believes that this is the case can be seen in that they released WindowsXP with many many utilities bundled in the product. This is precisely the sort of thing for which they are being taken to task!

Their bundling of Internet Explorer with the OS was clearly for the purpose of killing their competition, and it worked! Netscape has been ineffective for years. It is a non-issue for Microsoft today, as is Novell.

How many more companies have died as a result of Microsoft's predatory tactics? For Microsoft, winning is not the objective. Killing their competition is their objective. Without sever punishment, how many other companies will die?

Microsoft's predatory tactics have done in dozens of "partners" and technology suppliers. Microsoft has a long history of:

- Intentionally writing incompatibilities between their products and those of competitors (DR DOS and Windows 3.1)

- Acquiring their competitors, (Visio)

- Re-writing their competitors' tools, (Netscape)

- Stealing their competitors' tools, (Stac)

- Directly attacking the competition with incompatibility, FUD, and in some cases explicitly dishonest advertising. (Novell)

Time does not permit me to list all of the quantitative abuses that Microsoft has undertaken, and the full scope of their destruction can probably never be known.

They have become one of the most successful companies in the world by use of these tactics. In spite of the verdict of abuse of monopoly power, Microsoft shows no remorse for their actions and continues to this day to abuse their power. They are flaunting their capability to

bundle products and attack competitors even while this decision is being considered!

The only way that Microsoft can be convinced to change its ways is by radical intervention both in terms of its business practices and punitive measures. I am pleased that the terms of the agreement spell out that Microsoft must no longer abuse their customers, but the decision must go deeper, or the consumers will continue to suffer.

To be sure, Microsoft has offered much to the US economy, and has shaped the consumer marketplace in huge ways. Computing today is far more advanced than it was, but are we better off with Microsoft than if it had never come into being? Microsoft's tactics are not innovative, but rather suppress innovation.

In order to provide as equitable a result as possible, Microsoft must at a minimum be forced to split into multiple companies, and must pay substantive penalties for their abuses.

They cannot restore Netscape to its former position, but unless real penalties are assessed, (and I mean in terms of billions of dollars in CASH, not products) they will continue to harm the consumer and the economy.

Talk of a punitive measure of \$1B largely comprised of MS products is frightening. That would serve to further MS hegemony in the PC marketplace, and to suppress alternative technologies. This would occur while actually costing Microsoft very little.

I make my living largely through implementation of Microsoft products. I would prefer not to, but since they own the vast majority of the marketplace, I have little choice. In spite of the fact that MS product implementation provides most of my income, I believe that Microsoft must be punished. Please do not settle for a mere slap on the wrist!

Finding suitable punitive measures would allow for more innovation in the marketplace and will be beneficial in the long term for the US and our economy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message.

Sincerely,
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